

## Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

## Inquiry into the 2024-25 Financial and Performance Outcomes

## Questions on Notice

taken by witnesses for the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
on 28 November 2025

**Witnesses:**

- Ms. Peta McCammon
- Ms. Annette Lancy
- Ms. Rachael Green
- Mr. Mark Stracey
- Mr. Danny O’Kelly
- Mr. Simon Newport
- Ms. Melanie Heenan
- Ms. Michele Clark

**QUESTION 1 – Children****How many children over the last 12 months were dual clients with Youth Justice?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** My first question: yesterday we were told by the Department of Justice and Community Safety that they did not have this data but that DFFH did. Can you please tell me how many children in the child protection system in 2024–25 also came before the youth justice system?

**Peta McCAMMON:** Thanks for the question. I appreciate that this came up yesterday. The data that I have today that I can provide is the number of dual clients – so clients who would be within the child protection system and also a client of youth justice – and I have that data as at the end of May. So in terms of –

**Roma BRITNELL:** That is for 11 months of the reporting year?

**Peta McCAMMON:** What I have is at a point in time. So children that are in care – we have approximately 9000 children at any one point of time in care. As at 31 May this year, 155 were dual clients of youth justice –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Just on that one date.

**Peta McCAMMON:** On that one date, yes.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. Can you provide the amount of children who came to the two departments within that 12-month period of reporting, please? I am happy for you to look into that and provide it to the committee later if you have not got it today.

**Peta McCAMMON:** Sure. I can see what we can provide, because obviously it is a bit of a dynamic figure. But I am happy to see what we can provide.

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 3-4*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

**RESPONSE**

As at 30 June 2025, there were 155 dual clients of Child Protection and Youth Justice.

## QUESTION 2 – Children

### What is the real time spending per child for children in out of home care (cost per child)?

**Roma BRITNELL** You mentioned 9000 children, a bit more I think than in care at any one time at the moment in Victoria; 2023–24 I think those figures were from. Can you tell us the real spending per child in Victoria during that time period for the children in out-of-home care, please?

**Peta MCCAMMON:** Probably the closest we would have is the data that we provide for the ROGS, the report on government services, which is publicly available. Obviously when we talk about children in care, that could be a child in kinship care, that could be a child in foster care, that –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Yes, I understand the definition of ‘out-of-home care’. I just want the figure overall. But if you could extrapolate out the cost of children in residential care, that would be fantastic.

**Peta MCCAMMON:** Yes, we can see what we already provide. I do not know whether we have that ROGS data today, but otherwise we can see what we can provide.

**Roma BRITNELL:** If you can extrapolate that out, that would be great.

**Peta McCAMMON:** Yes.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 4*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

Victoria’s real recurrent expenditure on care services per child in care was \$120,823 in 2023-24. This includes expenditure on both residential and non-residential (home-based) care (Source: *Report on Government Services 2025*, Table 16A.37).

For residential care in 2023-24, Victoria’s real recurrent expenditure per child in care was \$1.217 million (Source: *Report on Government Services 2025*, Table 16A.37).

## QUESTION 3 – Children

### How often are children seeing their case workers within residential care – extract the data for children in care and how often they see their case worker?

**Roma BRITNELL:** How often does each child see a caseworker? In the year, how many points in time are the children seeing their caseworker, and what is the average time that a child entering child protection has to wait to see a caseworker?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I think it is a highly variable response, but I might ask Mr O’Kelly to talk to that one.

**Danny O’KELLY:** Thank you. It depends on circumstances, and I am not sure, when you –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Perhaps if we could just leave it for children in residential care. How often do they see their caseworker?

**Danny O’KELLY:** We will not have a stated precise figure. Sometimes their caseworkers are actually contracted workers, so a case manager from one of our funded agencies where we have got contracted case management.

**Roma BRITNELL:** So that means you do not know because it is the contractor’s determination how often they see them?

**Danny O’KELLY:** No, it means providing an exact figure in terms of how often every child in residential care is visited by a case manager –

**Roma BRITNELL:** That is not documented? If you cannot provide us data, I would be very surprised.

**Danny O’KELLY:** We would need to take that on notice.

**Roma BRITNELL:** That is absolutely fine.

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 4-5*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

## RESPONSE

Young people in residential care can be allocated to either a Child Protection Practitioner or contracted Case Manager. If a young person is allocated to a Child Protection Practitioner, a fortnightly visit is considered a reasonable minimum in line with Child Protection’s client visit policy as described and publicly available in the Child Protection Manual. Individual circumstances influence how regularly a young person in residential care sees their allocated practitioner and/or contracted Case Manager. These circumstances are considered in the context of case planning discussions, development and review processes. This may mean that young people in residential care are visited more frequently than fortnightly.

The frequency, focus, and effectiveness of visits to all children, including young people in residential care, is regularly reviewed through supervision and in the context of case planning.

## QUESTION 4 – Children

### Number of investigations assessed as urgent, how many are visited within 2 days and how many outside 2 days?

**Roma BRITNELL:** The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing’s annual report states that 97 per cent of child abuse allegations deemed as urgent were visited or attempted to have been visited within two days of the report. How many were not visited, and what number is represented by that 3 per cent that were not visited in the two days?

**Danny O’KELLY:** Again, I would have to take that on notice.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. If you can turn those percentages into numbers, then provide that.

**Danny O’KELLY:** If you look at the numbers that are available around those deemed urgent, there are a number of reasons why those deemed urgent are not visited within –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Abuse is urgent. I understand that. Your figure is 97 per cent – it is just that 3 per cent and how many that constitutes as a number.

**Danny O’KELLY:** Ninety-seven per cent is the indicator for us that we try and hit. There are circumstances where we learn more and a situation that might not have been deemed urgent at the intake phase changes.

**Roma BRITNELL:** My question is really about how many were not visited and what number is represented by that 3 per cent.

**Peta McCAMMON:** Just to be clear, that is a time measure. That is saying: of those children or young people who have been deemed as urgent, how many have been visited within two days? The answer is on average 97 per cent, which is –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Yes, I am asking for that to be translated into numbers.

**Peta McCAMMON:** But that does not mean those children have not been visited. That is a measure of how many of those have been visited within two days, and as Danny said, that is within our KPIs. I do not want to give the committee the impression that means that 3 per cent of children have not been visited.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. All right. Thank you. And thank you for taking that detail on notice to provide to the committee.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 5*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

## RESPONSE

In 2024-25:

- 5,673 reports were received that required an urgent investigation
- 5,478 were visited within 2 days
- 165 visits were completed outside 2 days.

Additional time taken to undertake these visits usually relates to:

- receipt of additional information which changes the response classification to requiring an urgent visit
- coordination with Victoria Police or other services to ensure the visit is conducted safely
- extended time required to locate and contact relevant family members.

## QUESTION 5 – Children

**How many nights did children spend in hotels or similar accommodation, such as caravan parks, Airbnb, and what is the cost of that?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** How many nights did children in care spend in hotels or similar accommodation, such as caravan parks and Airbnbs, and what is the cost of that?

**Danny O’KELLY:** Children in care – we will only use a hotel or an arrangement like that when we have got an emergency circumstance that means –

**Roma BRITNELL:** I understand. But we do know that demand has got higher, so that is why I want the specifics around where we are at now with how many children are having to use these extraordinary forms of accommodation in an emergency.

**Danny O’KELLY:** I do want to stress they are not used as medium- to long-term forms of accommodation. We only ever use those options for children –

**Roma BRITNELL:** For two weeks?

**Danny O’KELLY:** No, for less than that. More often than not it might be for a young person where we have had to take out an order at 11 o’clock at night.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. My question, though, is about how many nights. I would be really interested to see if you have got that data, because I have had cases where they have been in caravan parks for some time. You are right, it is not months, but it is a long time for children. So it would be great if you could provide that information for me.

**Danny O’KELLY:** We can take that on notice.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 5-6*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

## RESPONSE

Placements are made by Child Protection Practitioners as needed, at any time of the day or night. All available placement options are explored prior to a child being placed with a carer in a hotel. At times, children and young people that come into the care of child protection may need to be placed temporarily in a hotel, accompanied by a carer, whilst work is undertaken to coordinate a suitable care and placement arrangement. Every effort is made to ensure children placed in a hotel have their individual needs met and supported by Child Protection staff, prior to them being settled into their identified placement.

In 2024-25, Child Protection utilised hotels for short term emergency accommodation on 9 occasions. On the 9 occasions referenced the maximum number of nights of accommodation was 2 nights. The total approximate costs were \$3,800.

## QUESTION 6 – Children

**Provide the age breakdown or average age of the children involved in the sexual abuse incidents and whether they relate to more than one incident per child?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** I understand that page 46 of the CCYP annual report states that there were 334 incidents of sexual abuse in 2024–25. Can you provide the age breakdown or average age of the children involved in these incidents and whether they relate to more than one incident per child?

**Danny O’KELLY:** In terms of age breakdown, we would have to take that on notice.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 6*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

## RESPONSE

Incident reporting data is a snapshot in time of allegations made by clients of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (department) and includes disclosures of historical abuse. They are recorded and remain as incidents regardless of whether further information becomes available to substantiate or disprove an event.

The department publishes data each quarter on the number of reported client incidents that occurred during service delivery in the child protection and family services system, including child protection services (department delivered), community-based child and family services (department funded), secure welfare services, and out-of-home care services (kinship care, foster care and residential care).

In the published data for 2024-25, of the 1149 incidents of abuse reported, 334 incidents were allegations of sexual abuse. Within the 334 incidents, there were 231 different children who reported an allegation of sexual abuse including 58 children who were involved in multiple allegations of sexual abuse during the period.

A breakdown of the age of the 231 children involved in the 334 incidents is provided below:

Client Age	Number of children involved in a sexual abuse allegation across all service delivery types (Child Protection, Family Services, Secure Welfare, Kinship Care, Foster Care and Residential Care)
4 or under	4

5	3
6	4
7	1
8	8
9	9
10	7
11	3
12	12
13	28
14	40
15	46
16	45
17	19
18	2
Total	231

## QUESTION 7 – Children

### How many children in the child protection system year to date were sexually exploited?

**Roma BRITNELL:** How many children in the child protection system year to date were sexually exploited?

**Danny O'KELLY:** In the period that we are –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Year to date.

**Danny O'KELLY:** So are we talking about the period that the estimates committee is looking at, or are we looking at –

**Roma BRITNELL:** I have asked about the period, and you are providing that data. But this is obviously worrying and concerning. How many children from then till now?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I think we would have to, in terms of –

**Danny O'KELLY:** Yes, I would have to take that on notice. I have not –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. Thank you.

**Peta McCAMMON:** I think, to be clear, though, the CIMS data is obviously an important system for us to understand where there are incidents that have happened in care and also to understand then the actions that have been taken. The CCYP does report pretty transparently in terms of itemised CIMS data, which actually talks to those numbers. Whether then we can break that down to individual children I think we would have to take on notice.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Thank you.

**Hearing Transcript, p. 6**

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

Incident reporting data is a snapshot in time of allegations made by clients of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (department) and includes disclosures of historical abuse. They are recorded and remain as incidents regardless of whether further information becomes available to substantiate or disprove

an event.

The department publishes data each quarter on the number of client incidents that occurred during service delivery in the child protection and family services system, including child protection services (department delivered), community-based child and family services (department funded), secure welfare services, and out-of-home care services (kinship care, foster care and residential care).

In the latest published data (Quarter 1 2025-26), of the 362 incidents of abuse reported, 104 were allegations of sexual abuse and 33 were allegations of sexual exploitation.

## QUESTION 8 – Children

**How many children went through the state’s Pathways to Good Health program, have all been screened when they enter out of home care?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** Can you advise how many children went through the state’s pathways to good health program, which I understand children are supposed to go through when they enter the child protection system. Have all the children been screened under the pathways to good health program when they enter the program or re-enter the program?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I know I do not have that data with me today. I am not sure whether –

**Danny O’KELLY:** We will have to take that on notice.

**Peta McCAMMON:** We will take that on notice for you.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 6*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

The Pathway to Good Health program is the responsibility of the Department of Health. It provides screening, assessment, planning and referral for children entering or re-entering care in Victoria. All children entering or re-entering statutory care in Victoria are automatically referred to Pathway to Good Health.

As part of the screening, Pathway to Good Health works collaboratively with Child Protection to gather information to determine the need for a more comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment. The program draws on existing health assessments and information to determine the most appropriate pathway for assessment, planning and referral ensuring that there no duplication or replacement of existing health assessments and treatment programs.

The program has been implemented in stages in DFFH areas across Victoria, commencing in 2023-24. The program is currently being delivered in 16 of 17 DFFH areas. Implementation of the remaining DFFH area (Wimmera South West) is being finalised and planned to commence by 12 January 2026.

The Department of Health advise that, in 2024-25, 1,904 children and young people received a service through the Pathway to Good Health program.



## QUESTION 9 – Children

**How many children who were in care have become pregnant while in care and any babies born to children in child protection system in that year (deidentified)?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** Can you tell me: were there any pregnancies found during the time that children were re-entered into care or in care? Were any babies born to children in the child protection system in that year?

**Peta McCAMMON:** In terms of children and young people who have been in the care of the state for the 2024–25 year, yes, we are aware of circumstances where those young people were –

**Roma BRITNELL:** So you will be able to give me the figures on how many?

**Peta McCAMMON:** Yes. I think we just have to be careful about de-identifying.

**Roma BRITNELL:** I would not ask for that information to threaten any child, no.

**Danny O’KELLY:** We just have to be careful that it is not such a small number that it does in fact identify the children.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 7*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

In 2024-25, 9 babies were born to young people on Care by Secretary Orders.

## QUESTION 10 – Children

**How many children have been found to have sexually transmitted diseases or alcohol and drug addiction?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** What other health issues were detected? If a child is in the system year in, year out during their time, are they checked every year? And how many children were found to have sexually transmitted diseases or alcohol or drug addiction?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I definitely know we do not have that data. I think again we are getting pretty close to some pretty personal information around young people in care. I am happy to take that on notice, but I am just mentioning –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Well, we know that children in care are being sexually exploited. Predators are hanging around outside residential care facilities. That has been reported by the CCYP year in, year out. You talked about the program for complex and high-profile matters, but it is more than just high-profile matters. They are all complex. These are young people, and I know from what one provider told me that not all children but that certainly almost all girls in care are being sexually exploited. That is why I think with what has been going on in the childcare system that people are interested in these sexually transmitted diseases, perhaps.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 7*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

When a child is taken into care by Child Protection, the immediate health and wellbeing needs of the child are assessed. If it is determined that a medical assessment or medical treatment is required, this is arranged as a priority.



Children known to Child Protection may have unmet health needs or develop health issues during their child protection involvement. Identified health needs, including what is necessary to address these needs, are documented in the child's case plan where relevant, and recorded in the health screens in the child's case file. Child Protection Practitioners and service providers provide extensive wrap around case management to support children's immediate and holistic health needs, in line with the Looking After Children framework. This includes arranging for children and young people to be seen by a general practitioner to assess their general physical health, immunisation, chronic health conditions and mental wellbeing.

The department does not aggregate the private health information of young people residing in residential care.

A significant proportion of children and young people in care are vulnerable and have experienced abuse and neglect, the impact of which may lead to challenging and complex behaviour including the use of drugs. Children and young people who have substance abuse issues are required to be referred to drug and alcohol services. In 2024-25, 158 young people who resided in residential care for all or part of the year had an active referral for alcohol and other drug services.

## QUESTION 11 – Children

### How many Child Protection Practitioner roles were vacant as at 30 June 2025?

**Roma BRITNELL:** Can I ask you about the child protection workforce? How many child protection jobs are vacant at this time?

**Peta McCAMMON:** I can answer as of 30 June.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Yes.

**Peta McCAMMON:** I know I definitely have this. I think it is 300-and-something. Let me find it. As at 30 June the vacancy rate was – I know we have got it. Danny, do you –

**Roma BRITNELL:** Rather than waste time, because we do have a very short amount of time and I am struggling to get the answers I need –

**Peta McCAMMON:** Sure. We will try and find it in the break.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Okay. Thank you.

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 8-9*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

On 30 June 2025 there were 364.8 ongoing vacancies within the frontline Victorian Child Protection program.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing implemented a refreshed Child Protection operating model between December 2024 and March 2025. The refreshed model redistributes the existing budget to enable an increase in the overall full time equivalent (FTE) from 2,486.1 to 2,598.8. This is an increase of 112.7 FTE.

## QUESTION 12 – Children

**What is the staff turn over during the 2024-25 year within Child Protection? How many staff left within that year?**

**Roma BRITNELL:** What is the staff turnover in the period discussed within child protection? How many staff left within that year? Again, if you have not got that information right now and want to provide that on notice, I can continue with my questions.

**Danny O'KELLY:** We will provide the exact figures. What we are seeing is a reduction in the turnover rate, and the things we are doing in the retention space are starting to take effect.

**Roma BRITNELL:** Good.

**Danny O'KELLY:** The retention rate and turnover rate are dropping to around that 9 to 10 per cent mark, which from an industry perspective is pretty good in terms of other comparative areas.

**Roma BRITNELL:** I would really love figures rather than percentages, because these are children and I do not like talking about them as percentages; I like to talk about them as people we care about – very vulnerable individuals in fact.

*Hearing Transcript, p.9*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Roma BRITNELL

### RESPONSE

As at 30 June 2025, there were 2171.69 FTE case carrying Child Protection Practitioners (CPP3-6), compared to 2162.7 FTE case carrying Child Protection Practitioners at 30 June 2024.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing implemented a refreshed Child Protection operating model between December 2024 and March 2025. The refreshed model redistributes the existing budget to enable an increase in the overall full time equivalent (FTE) from 2,486.1 to 2,598.8, including CPP2s. This is an increase of 112.7 FTE.

## QUESTION 13 – Housing

**How much funding for the project has been allocated to build homes in Colac from the Regional Housing Fund?**

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. Okay. Going to social housing, the Regional Housing Fund was meant to build 30 social and 20 affordable homes in Pound Road, Colac, by 2028. How much funding has been allocated to that project?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I would have to take that funding on notice.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 17*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Richard WELCH

### RESPONSE

The Colac project is currently in active procurement of construction contractors and as a result the allocation of funding is commercially sensitive information which cannot be released at this time.

## QUESTION 14 – Housing

**From any time after the 15th of August 2024, the number of rental properties rented by the department in 19 specific suburbs and the terms on which they were rented.**

**Richard WELCH:** I am just going to quickly go back to the retail renting and the taking of retail rental properties by the department. Given your contention is that you were not competing with the market and you were not doing non-market terms, could you provide from any time after 15 August 2024 the number of rental properties rented by the department in those suburbs that I mentioned? There are 19 of them.

[Albion, Ardeer, Braybrook, Maidstone, Maribyrnong, Sunshine, Sunshine North, Sunshine West, Brunswick, Brunswick East, Brunswick West, Carlton, Carlton North, East Melbourne, Kensington, North Melbourne, Melbourne, Princess Hill, West Melbourne – transcript p.18].

**Peta McCAMMON:** Sure, we could provide that.

**Richard WELCH:** The terms on which they were rented.

**Peta McCAMMON:** Yes. We are happy to take it on notice, and if there is a reason why we cannot – but happy to take it on notice, if you provide –

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 18, 24-25*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Richard WELCH

### RESPONSE

From the 15 August 2024, a total of 10 dwellings were rented. The number of leased properties per suburb is shown below

Albion (0), Ardeer (1), Braybrook (0), Maidstone (1), Maribyrnong (0), Sunshine (1), Sunshine North (1), Sunshine West (0), Brunswick (0), Brunswick East (0), Brunswick West (0), Carlton (0), Carlton North (0), East Melbourne (0), Kensington (2), North Melbourne (3), Melbourne (0), Princess Hill (0) and West Melbourne (1).

All properties are leased at a market value as assessed by Valuer General Victoria.

## QUESTION 15 – Prevention of Family Violence

**Please provide ‘response’ times for L17 referrals to The Orange Door, including a breakdown by number of days (1 day, 2-3 days, 4-7 days, 8-14 days, over 14 days); and provide the number and proportion of ‘urgent’ (Tier 1) persons that were not responded to within three days.**

**Melanie HEENAN:** Thank you. I do not think Ms Britnell got to ask me that question. She was talking about personal safety alarms. In relation to L17s for 2024–25, there were 95,381 over the course of the year, and that represents 51.8 per cent of referrals to the Orange Door.

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. How many of those were presented as being high risk?

**Melanie HEENAN:** That is a question that I may have to see if I can take on notice. It will be that every one of those L17s would have gone through a risk assessment. Part of the screening, intake and triage process that the Orange Door undertakes is to do that very thing. To undertake a risk assessment at that point, it would be determined whether or not the risk is assessed as at very serious level, sometimes referred to as a tier 1, and the urgency through which that particular matter would need to move through to the assessment and planning teams in the Orange Door.

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. Of those, how many were responded to within two to three days?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I will take that on notice for you.

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. You might need to take this on notice – your choice. But can you provide a breakdown of the response times for all L17s, showing how many were responded to within one day, two to three days, four to seven days, eight to 14 days and greater than 14 days?

**Melanie HEENAN:** We should be able to do that for you, Mr Welch, as a point in time, because the manner in which the cases are moving will be throughputs and it will be very dependent on the type of matter or the matter that is being worked by the practitioners.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 25*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Richard WELCH

## RESPONSE

For all L17s referrals a breakdown (number and proportion) by the following:

- i. Within one day
- ii. Two to three days
- iii. Four to seven days
- iv. Eight to 14 days
- v. Greater than 14 days

The table below provides a breakdown of response times in 2024-25 for all persons from L17 referrals that received an Orange Door response.

	Within one day	2-3 days	4-7 days	8-14 days	Greater than 14 days
<b>Number</b>	120,854	95,683	51,077	9,786	3,719
<b>Percentage</b>	43%	34%	18%	3%	1%

The primary reasons for L17 referrals taking longer than seven days to triage include:

- i. Incomplete L17 referrals where the Respondent (Person Using Violence) has not been spoken to which results in The Orange Door team waiting on further advice from Victoria Police to support the triaging process
- ii. Increased self-referrals with continued community confidence accessing The Orange Door
- iii. Administrative errors where the L17 referral had not been appropriately closed out in the system, but where the triaging process has been completed and the person has been assigned to assessment and planning.

### Number and proportion of 'urgent' (Tier 1) persons that were not responded to within 3 days

Every person referred to The Orange Door is triaged for risk and need using a statewide triage tool that assesses family violence risk and child and young person wellbeing factors. The statewide triage tool requires the practitioner to apply their professional judgement and determine whether the person is at high risk/need and triage them as Tier One, Two or Three, with Tier One being the highest risk/need. The triage rating determines the priority and urgency of assigning the person to practitioners in the assessment and planning teams.

In 2024-25, 163,750 persons from an L17 referral were triaged as Tier One. Of these people, 83 per cent (135,832) were responded to within three business days. The remaining 17 per cent (27,918) were responded to beyond three business days.

*Note: Each L17 referral can have multiple 'persons'. 'Persons' can include a child, young person or an adult.*

## QUESTION 16 – Prevention of Family Violence

**Please provide the longest wait time for a response to an L17 referral (days)?**

**Richard WELCH:** Actually, I will just move on. We might get to what you are about to give me, hopefully. What was the longest time for a response to an L17?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I do not have that available for you today.

**Richard WELCH:** Can you provide that on notice?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Yes, I can.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 26*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Richard WELCH

### RESPONSE

In 2024-25, the longest recorded wait time for a response to an L17 referral was 243 days due to an administrative error in closing the L17 referral record post the completion of the triaging process.

This L17 referral was progressed to case one day after the referral was received, meaning that the person was contacted by an Assessment and Planning practitioner to offer support.

## QUESTION 17 – Prevention of Family Violence

**Please provide a breakdown of L17 referrals to The Orange Door by DFFH area, and timeframes for responses (as per above)**

**Richard WELCH:** Could you provide a breakdown of L17 referrals to the Orange Door, including the breakdown of all key sites, timeframe of response and to output access point of level, if available?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I might have to ask you to clarify that last part. I can certainly do a breakdown. I have a breakdown here in fact of L17s by primary site. That is the most significant site. There are access points and outposts in most areas now that are attached to or are part of a primary site's work, if you are interested in a particular region. But I have certainly got the breakdown of L17s by those primary sites.

**Richard WELCH:** I think we just want the broad breakdown, thank you.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 26*

**Name of Committee member asking question:** Richard WELCH

### RESPONSE

All professional referrals, including L17s, are screened and triaged at the eighteen primary sites of The Orange Door. The table below provides a breakdown of L17 referrals in 2024-25 by area (primary site).

Area (key site)	Number of L17 Referrals
Barwon	5,964
Bayside Peninsula	10,542
Brimbank Melton	6,026
Central Highlands Area	4,383
Goulburn	4,643
Hume Merri-bek	5,227
Inner Eastern Melbourne	4,407
Inner Gippsland	5,401

Loddon	4,620
Mallee	2,895
North-East Melbourne	7,788
Outer Eastern Melbourne	4,796
Outer Gippsland	3,570
Ovens Murray	2,632
South West (WSW)	1,968
Southern Melbourne	10,548
Western Melbourne	8,694
Wimmera (WSW)	1,277
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,381</b>

*Note that the total is lower than the sum of each area's L17 referrals due to some L17 referrals being re-routed (transferred) between The Orange Door networks*

Victoria Police completed a total of 151,973 L17 referrals in 2024-25. Of those, 95,381 were referred to The Orange Door, which is lower than the total as some L17 referrals may be directed elsewhere, for example to Child Protection, Victims of Crime or Safe Steps for an After-Hours response. It is important to note that L17 referrals received in 2024-25 represent a portion (51.8%) of the total number of referrals received by The Orange Door. These are in addition to self-referrals (29.7%), professional referrals (9.6%), Child Protection referrals (8.6%) and referrals from other sources (0.3%).

The table below provides a percentage breakdown of the response timeframe in 2024-25 for all persons from L17 referrals by area:

Area (key site)	Response times for all persons from L17 referrals by area (%)				
	≤1 day	2-3 days	4-7 days	8-14 days	>14 days
Barwon	37%	40%	20%	2%	1%
Bayside Peninsula	37%	32%	26%	4%	1%
Brimbank Melton	51%	34%	12%	2%	1%
Central Highlands Area	63%	31%	6%	1%	0%
Goulburn	41%	37%	17%	4%	1%
Hume Merri-bek	38%	37%	20%	4%	1%
Inner Eastern Melbourne	34%	42%	22%	1%	1%
Inner Gippsland	47%	40%	10%	2%	1%
Loddon	42%	34%	19%	3%	2%
Mallee	73%	23%	2%	0%	1%
North-East Melbourne*	26%	29%	26%	11%	7%
Outer Eastern Melbourne	26%	31%	39%	3%	1%
Outer Gippsland	46%	41%	12%	1%	0%
Ovens Murray	17%	41%	37%	4%	1%
South West (WSW)	53%	30%	12%	3%	2%
Southern Melbourne	51%	28%	15%	5%	1%
Western Melbourne	47%	38%	12%	2%	1%
Wimmera (WSW)	74%	21%	4%	1%	1%

## QUESTION 18 – Prevention of Family Violence

### Please provide the average waiting time for a refuge response

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. The number of family violence victim-survivors who received a refuge response decreased by 16.2 per cent. It is on, if you want to look it up, page 61. In raw numbers, how many people missed out?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I can absolutely come to that for you. There are two key factors that contributed to underperformance –

**Richard WELCH:** Just the numbers if you would, please.

**Melanie HEENAN:** I guess it is important for me to –

**Peta McCAMMON:** Just to clarify the question, I think Mr Welch's question was: how many family violence victims missed out on refuge?

**Melanie HEENAN:** Yes, and the answer to that is that there would be unlikely to have been any person that was seeking a response that did not get one.

**Richard WELCH:** Zero?

**Melanie HEENAN:** I would suggest that if a person or a family was seeking refuge and because of the reasons that led to the underperformance which were data related and maintenance related, there are alternatives that services will use when they have got maintenance or planned upgrade works that are happening. It is not that that family would not be offered a crisis accommodation response.

**Richard WELCH:** If this is the same answer, you can just tell me it is the same answer and I will not waste any time with it, because I have got a series in the same vein. How many families with children were amongst those who missed out?

**Melanie HEENAN:** It is a qualified answer again, I am sorry, Mr Welch. It is because what would have occurred in relation to the – and my colleague Mr Newport might like to speak to this further – families that would have otherwise gone into the refuges that were having planned upgrades meant that their BP3 measures – their performance – were not counted, because they can only be counted through that mechanism, but they would have been offered other properties or motels or other accommodation.

**Richard WELCH:** Thank you. What was the average wait time to get refuge accommodation?

**Melanie HEENAN:** The average wait time I will check on. I do not have that figure before me; I may be able to get it. In terms of the manner in which a refuge placement will work, it would always be that the family is offered something in between times. So for example –

**Richard WELCH:** But you would have your own performance measurements on that – your own stats – so if you could provide on notice the actual stats of it, you can qualify that when you provide it.

**Melanie HEENAN:** Okay.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 27*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Richard WELCH

### RESPONSE

Data on the average waiting times for a refuge response is not currently captured by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Victim survivors at serious and imminent risk of significant harm, injury or death from a family violence perpetrator, and who have no other safe accommodation, are prioritised for a refuge placement.



Since August 2023, specialist family violence services have been operating under the Victorian Family Violence Crisis Response Model. Under this model, specialist family violence services respond immediately with support and crisis accommodation where a victim survivor's assessed level of risk under MARAM requires this.

When victim survivors are supported into alternative emergency accommodation options, other vital risk management strategies and supports are put in place at the same time, including access to intensive face to face outreach support on a 24/7 basis if required.

The 2024–25 outcome for the performance measure 'number of family violence victim survivors who received a refuge response' is lower than the 2024–25 target due to a combination of factors. This includes maintenance and upgrades works being undertaken on a number of refuge properties which reduced capacity, as well as under-reporting by agencies. A complex interplay of factors also contributes to longer stays in refuge including housing affordability, a lack of available rental properties, or other suitable exit options for victim survivors.

The counting rules for the performance measure are designed to capture the performance of the refuge system. This means that victim survivors who are accommodated in alternative crisis accommodation models, including some short-stay crisis accommodation facilities, some Crisis Accommodation Properties and motels are not captured in the BP3 results.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing is working to improve data on refuge and crisis accommodation. This includes amending the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform (SHIP), used by all funded specialist family violence agencies to record supports provided to victim survivors experiencing crisis, to more accurately monitor demand for funded services and understand gaps across the service system. In 2023-24, five new data points were added to capture specific accommodation types provided to victim survivors in crisis. Family violence agencies are now required to complete these new fields. Over time, this will enable the Department to provide more detailed data.

## QUESTION 19 – Housing

**12 Holland Court, Flemington - can you provide details of how much spent on maintenance at this location?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon. I will start us off on the public housing at 12 Holland Court, Flemington. At 12 Holland Court, can I ask: what was the total spend for maintenance in 2024–25?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I do not have the maintenance spend by individual locations.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** With you today – are you able to provide it on notice?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I am sure we will be able to provide you with something. I am not sure we will be able to provide you with every single detail, but we will do our best, yes.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 35*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

The maintenance spend for 12 Holland Court Flemington for the Financial Year 2024/25 was in the order of \$300,000. This spend included responsive maintenance to homes (\$170,225) and the servicing and maintenance of critical plant and essential safety equipment (~\$130,000).

The building also had cleaning, gardening and security services provided under contracts which cover the

entire estate. An allocation of these costs has not been included in the above numbers.

It should be noted that for the period of 2024/25 renters within the building were being relocated to homes of their choice. During this time, the cleaning regime and the monitoring, maintenance and servicing regime for the critical plant, essential safety equipment and public lighting remained unchanged. However, because of the relocations, there were no maintenance costs associated with tenancy changeover. Additionally, because the building was being retired, there were no capital costs associated with the lifecycle renewal of centralised plant, essential safety equipment or security and access control systems.

The above costs do not include any decommissioning costs for the units as they became vacant, or for measures to curtail unsafe activity and limit risks to renters arising from activities, such as copper theft or squatting, that may have arisen during the period of reduced occupancy.

## QUESTION 20 – Housing

### Security camera and gates at 12 Holland court - how much spent on these?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you. My understanding is that, at 12 Holland Court in Flemington, Homes Victoria has installed security cameras on each floor and around the building perimeter and has put up electronic steel barricades and gates on every floor. Can I ask how much money specifically was spent on installing those cameras and gates?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I will have to get you that information. We are obviously taking every effort to keep the handful of people in that building safe from both protesters and potential squatters. We are doing everything we can to protect those few people that are left.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 35*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

12 Holland Court, Flemington is currently going through a relocation and decommissioning process with over 90 per cent of renters already relocated to homes of their choice. During this period, the department recognises the increased risks to remaining renters and the public of issues such as vandalism, squatting and anti-social behaviour. In towers at 141 Nicholson St and 20 Elgin St, the issues that were addressed included people accessing these sites to attempt to steal copper including live electrical cables and gas pipes, elevator motor room parts and to engage in other illegal activity.

To mitigate these risks and keep renters and the public safe, steel gates are being installed on vacant floors to restrict unauthorised access. Cameras have not been installed throughout the building but have been used to monitor two vacant floors ahead of the installation of the doors. The existing perimeter CCTV coverage at this site has been augmented to support the monitoring and restriction of unauthorised access.

These measures are designed to ensure the safety of the remaining renters and to maintain the integrity of the building services until the last renter has been relocated.

The department spent approximately \$700,000 on installing gates and cameras at 12 Holland Court, Flemington.

## QUESTION 21 – Housing

### Richmond walkups - how much spent on new cameras at these locations?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you. I will ask then, still on that topic, about the Richmond walk-ups. Can I ask how much money was spent on new cameras for those walk-ups?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Again, I do not have that information on hand.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** But on notice is possible?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Yes, we can take that on notice.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 35*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

The cost for installation of new cameras at the Richmond walk-ups is as follows:

- 50 Egan St – ~\$44,000
- Anderson Court - ~\$47,000
- Williams Court - ~\$35,000
- Network uplift to accommodate these cameras costed ~\$100,000

Cameras were installed to deter anti-social behaviour and address health and safety concerns in carparks and other surrounding areas. These devices were funded through the Investing in a Thriving North Richmond Fund and were flagged as improvements in a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) report that was carried out by Victoria Police for the precinct.

## QUESTION 22 – Housing

### Building Communities Consortium – GLM – Flemington – Annual and Quarterly service payments for both Holland Court and Victoria Street (3 years of data please)?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you. Moving on, in terms of the Holland Court and Victoria Street, Flemington, developments under ground lease model project 1 led by Building Communities consortium, how much were their quarterly service payments for this financial year that we are examining?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I do not have the quarterly service payments by program here now. We will have to provide that information.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** On notice? That would be great.

**Simon NEWPORT:** Yes.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 35-36*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

In accordance with Partnerships Victoria policy and subject to contractual obligations, the quarterly service payments (QSP) are outlined in the Project Summary, which is available at the following location:

Ground Lease Model 1: <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/homes-victoria-ground-lease-model-project-1>.

The QSP's are fixed in time and amount over the life of the contract and are subject to various abatements as

set out in the performance regime in the Project Deed. The Project Deeds allow for reductions in payments (abatements) where performance requirements are not met.

The Project Deed that was released for tender as part of the procurement process for the Ground Lease Model project is available at the following location:

Ground Lease Model 1: <https://www.tenders.vic.gov.au/contract/view?id=193453>.

## QUESTION 23 – Housing

### Richmond - How much was spent on the walk up maintenance and repairs – Anderson Court, Williams Court, Elizabeth St? – 3 years?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you. Just looking at the Richmond walk-ups again, for those walk-ups on Anderson Court, Williams Court and Elizabeth Street, Richmond, can I ask how much was spent on maintenance and repairs for those walk-ups for this budget period?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Again, I am sorry, I do not have individual address maintenance information here, but we can see what we can do about digging up that information for you.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Alongside the others that I mentioned. Thank you. If you are digging those up, if you have got them for the previous three financial years, that would be of benefit also – only if you have got them.

**Simon NEWPORT:** We will do our best.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 36*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

The cost of responsive and vacated maintenance work across walk-ups on Anderson Court, Williams Court and Elizabeth Street, Richmond across the previous financial years is as follows:

- FY2024-25 - \$160,527
- FY2023-24 - \$330,456
- FY2022-23 - \$258,390

These areas also had security and grounds maintenance services provided as part of the estate amenity contracts for the Richmond Estate. An allocation of these costs has not been included in the above numbers.

## QUESTION 24 – Housing

### Were any land valuations undertaken of the estate land around the Richmond walk-ups?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you. Can I ask, for the Richmond walk-ups still: were any land valuations done on that estate land around the walk-ups for 2024–25?

**Simon NEWPORT:** To my knowledge, no, but again, I am not across every single detail of what a team member might do. To my knowledge, no, but again, I can just take that on notice to see whether there are any valuations. But I do not believe so.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** It would be good to know also if there had been valuations for that land prior to the budget period we are examining.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 36*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

There were no valuations of the estate land around the walk-ups in 2024-25.

## QUESTION 25 – Housing

### How many properties were vacant in the Solly Ave Estate as at 30 June 2025?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you. I might move on to another matter. Regarding public housing on Solly Avenue, Princes Hill, in October 2024 the Parliament was informed at the time by the minister that there were seven vacant properties at Solly Avenue estate. Can I ask for the period we are examining – we will say at 30 June – how many properties were vacant?

**Simon NEWPORT:** In total or just at that individual address?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** In that individual estate.

**Simon NEWPORT:** I have got it by LGA, I have got it by a number of categories, but I do not have individual addresses, so we can take that on notice

*Hearing Transcript, p. 37*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

As of 30 June, there were 10 vacant properties out of 108 homes in the Solly Avenue Estate due to:

- Nine (9) properties in the re-tenanting pipeline. Of these:
  - Six (6) properties were being assessed by the local office for works prior to re-tenanting.
  - Two (2) properties were undergoing drug remediation works.
  - One (1) property had undergone an upgrade and was in the process of being tenanted.
- One (1) property was subject to legal processes.

## QUESTION 26 – Housing

### Why were Solly Estate residents were notified of soil testing?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you. Earlier this year Solly Avenue estate residents were notified of soil testing works at the estate. Do we know why that was?

**Simon NEWPORT:** No. I am sorry, I am not armed with that information at present.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. You can come back on notice.

**Simon NEWPORT:** Yes.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 38*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

Homes Victoria periodically assesses the condition of public housing assets as a normal part of being a

responsible landlord and maintaining housing assets.

Investigations were undertaken at the Solly Avenue, Princes Hill estate in October 2025 to understand the soil conditions and the location of underground services.

## QUESTION 27 – Housing

### What were the projected and actual costs of relocating public housing residents in 2024-25?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** That would be great. I will move on now to relocations. Can I ask: what was the total projected cost specifically for relocations of public housing residents in 2024–25?

**Simon NEWPORT:** I do have some information on the budget for relocations. Let me just dig it up. I have got the relocations team, because we have 31 dedicated staff, and it costs us \$4.2 million a year to operate that team. In terms of the relocations, I do not have a breakdown for the year. I only have a breakdown of the approved funding and what has been spent so far. And that, of course, would include the staff costs.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Is that spent in 2024–25 or beyond?

**Simon NEWPORT:** It would be since the program, so it would be two years. If you want specifically last year, I will have to get back to you on notice.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes, that would be welcomed if you can.

**Simon NEWPORT:** But I can tell you that what has been committed so far is \$7.8 million.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** The question was around projected cost. It would be good to know: did those projections match the actual spend for relocation?

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 38-39*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

### RESPONSE

In 2024-25 financial year, the budget available to support all public housing relocation projects of public housing renters was \$12.4 million.

Relocation costs include a dedicated relocation workforce, moving and settling renters into new homes, and engaging community organisations to support renters throughout their move and to settle into new homes.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the actual costs incurred to relocate renters was \$6.2 million. The time taken to relocate all renters from a site is often more than a year as some family circumstances can and do mean more time is needed to vacate. Unspent relocation budget remains available into 2025-26 to support renters yet to have moved from those relocation sites.

## QUESTION 28 – Housing

### How much was spent on head leasing homes for relocation?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you. We touched on head leasing earlier, but just the one question I have there is: how much was spent on head leasing homes for relocations in 2024–25?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Again, same response: I have only got it for a program so far. In terms of what has been committed – and bearing in mind ‘committed’ covers the entire terms of the lease, which goes for five years, and we will not talk about that again – it is \$16.5 million. But there has only been \$151,000 expensed so far on leasing, so you can see it is very early days.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes, okay.

**Simon NEWPORT:** We have pointed out that the leased properties will be considerably under budget. We have not leased anywhere near the amount of properties we thought we may have needed to.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Right, okay. Not to be too repetitive, but if there is a 2024–25 number, if you could come back to us, that would be great.

**Simon NEWPORT:** We will.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 38-39*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

For 2024-25 total head leasing costs were approximately \$598,000 which includes rents, bonds, market valuations and pre-tenancy works.

## QUESTION 29 – Housing

**Howe many public housing maintenance reports were lodged by security guards in 2024-25?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Do you have the total number of public housing maintenance reports lodged by residential security guards for the budget period?

**Simon NEWPORT:** No. We can take that on notice. I am assuming you are going to ask me to take that on notice.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes. That would be great, thank you.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 39-41*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

The Housing Call Centre raises maintenance jobs on behalf of renters, their family members, friends/neighbours, support workers and staff, including security staff.

In the 2024-25 financial year, there were 2,130\* instances where the person reporting the maintenance issue was recorded as self-identifying as a security guard. This represents approximately 0.6% of all orders received.

*\*This count only includes where the person self-identified as security and will not count instances where self-identification did not occur. There is no way to report these instances.*

## QUESTION 30 – Housing

**How much public housing stock is still occupied?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you for those figures. It would be good to know, as at 30 June, how many of those would the department have deemed unsuitable to re-let?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Well, based on those statistics at the moment, at least 526 are currently going through that process. I would point out that out of the 1,231, given the excellent results for the year in terms of the turnaround times, I would expect all of those to come back. There might be 178 which are being assessed,



so that is a fairly small number out of 1,231. And out of that 368 which are going through detailed structural assessment, I would imagine some will pass and some will not.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay.

**Simon NEWPORT:** We would have no further information at that time. That will be the next year.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes, okay. Can I ask: of our public housing stock, how much of it is still occupied?

**Simon NEWPORT:** Well, everything. If I take the numbers and minus the vacancies, I can do the math for you, if you want to wait, or I can supply you the information.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** That is okay. You are welcome to supply that.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 40*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

## RESPONSE

In the 2024-25 financial year there were 2,392 additions to social housing stock, bringing the total to 90,068 homes in Victoria at 30 June 2025. This includes 64,532 public housing homes, of which 61,137 (or 95%) were tenanted.

At any given point in time there will be a small number of homes vacant due to the re-letting process and/or being held for asset management purposes (including extensive maintenance, awaiting demolition for redevelopment or advertised for sale). It is worth noting that properties are subject to extensive asset review processes prior to being divested, demolished, or redeveloped, and that funds raised from doing so are reinvested in delivering more and better social homes across the state.

Further information about movements in social housing dwellings in 2024-25 has been published in the 2024-25 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Annual Report and will also be available in the Additional Service Delivery Data (following publication in December 2025).

## QUESTION 31 – Equality

**Can I confirm that the department will continue the events for Pride St Party in Collingwood and Fitzroy?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** I will just move on to a total other matter, not on housing anymore. Looking at outputs under the department, page 120 of BP3, LGBTQIA+ equality policy and programs. Last year the department provided \$1.57 million for pride events across the state as part of a four-year, \$6.8 million investment for annual statewide events celebrating LGBTQIA+ communities, with that package finishing up this financial year that we are in now. On the Pride street party in Collingwood and Fitzroy specifically, can I confirm that the department intends to continue that event beyond what is currently funded?

**Rachael GREEN:** I do not have that with me. Can I come back to you on that?

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes, you definitely can. Yes, thank you.

**Rachael GREEN:** I would say highly likely, but I just do not have that here.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much

*Hearing Transcript, p. 41*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv PUGLIELLI

**RESPONSE**

The 2022-23 State Budget allocated \$6.8 million over 4 years for the delivery of Victoria's Pride until 2025-26. This funding delivers Regional Activation Program celebrations across the state and culminates with a Street Party held in Melbourne's inner north in February each year.

In 2024-25, almost 60,000 people attended the Street Party in a show of support for Victoria's LGBTIQ+ communities. Around the state, a further 25,000 people attended the 15 regional events as part of the Regional Activation Program.

The next Victoria's Pride Street Party will be held in Collingwood and Fitzroy on 8 February 2026. Future funding is subject to State Budget decisions.

**QUESTION 32 – Children****What medical/health checks are undertaken for carers to become permanent carers?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Moving on. I have a question now on permanent care parent applications. Can I confirm, when people are applying to become permanent care parents that they have to undergo health checks as part of the application process. Is that correct?

**Danny O'KELLY:** Health checks? I am not sure what type of health check you are referencing. There is a range of things that need to be assessed.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Can you take us through that?

**Danny O'KELLY:** I can provide you with specifics of what we go through in assessing a permanent carer.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Yes, okay. That would be great to have, particularly like medical checks I am referring to.

**Annette LANCY:** Yes, let us take a notice. We will see if we can get back to you.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay, thank you. And where I am going with this, just to confirm, has there been a practice that people have been required to undergo HIV testing to become permanent care parents?

**Danny O'KELLY:** Certainly not that I am aware of, no.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay.

**Annette LANCY:** But we will take it on.

**Danny O'KELLY:** But we can confirm that. We will take it on notice.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Thank you.

*Hearing Transcript, p. 41*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv Puglielli

**RESPONSE**

Under section 320 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Secretary can apply to the Children's Court for a permanent care order in respect of a person, or persons, "approved by the Secretary as suitable to have parental responsibility for the child".

Determination of whether a person is suitable to have responsibility is based on consideration of matters prescribed in the legislation and under regulation 18 of the Children, Youth and Families Regulations 2017, which sets out matters the Court must consider when making a permanent care order. This includes:

- the health, including medical and psychiatric health, of the person;

- the capacity of the person to provide stability and continuity of care for the duration of the permanent care order;
- the capacity of the person to promote and protect the child's safety, wellbeing and development for the duration of the permanent care order;
- the capacity of the person to preserve the child's identity and connection to the child's culture of origin and relationships with the child's birth family; and
- the person's general character including any criminal history.

Several assessments are undertaken to support consideration of whether a person is suitable to have parental responsibility. This includes:

- medical assessments, to assess the person's capacity to deliver safe and appropriate care that meets the needs of the individual child or young person, for the duration of the permanent care placement;
- Working With Children Checks for the person and other household members, and assessments of the home environment, to ensure the safety of the child or young person; and
- cultural assessments, provided by the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency, to consider the cultural needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provide advice on whether a permanent care placement is recommended.

The department does not prescribe tests for any specific medical conditions. The department medical assessment is completed by the person's medical practitioner to assess the applicants' past and present physical and emotional health and identifies any issues that may affect an applicant's capacity to care for a child until they reach 18 years of age. The medical assessment is a standardised assessment that includes circulatory, respiratory, glandular systems, skin, digestive, neurological, musculoskeletal, immune, mental health and general health and functional abilities, mobility and any specialist care including information on any chronic or terminal conditions.

### QUESTION 33 – Disability

**\$45.6 million allocated for 2024-25 state subsidy to fund group - does that include funding for group home providers?**

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** to budget paper 3, page 36 of 'Service Delivery', under the budget line 'Disability Services', there is \$45.6 million allocated for a 2024-25 state subsidy to fund group homes – a one-off allocation. Can I ask: does that include funding for group home providers Aruma, Life Without Barriers, Melba Support Services, Possibility and Scope? Is that correct?

**Peta McCAMMON:** We will have to confirm –

**Rachael GREEN:** I think I will take that on notice.

**Peta McCAMMON:** We will confirm the specifics of that for you.

**Aiv PUGLIELLI:** Okay. Thank you.

*Hearing Transcript, pp. 41-42*

**Name of Committee members asking question:** Aiv Puglielli

### RESPONSE

Budget Paper 3 Page 36 outlines two separate budget outcomes totalling \$45.6 million:

- \$24.0 million - Continuing support for Victorians with Disability; and
- \$21.6 million - Disability and Social Services Regulation.

The activities funded under each of these budget lines are outlined on page 39 of Budget Paper 3 and none of these activities are a subsidy for group homes.

The activities funded under these two separate budget outcomes are outlined below, as per page 39 of Budget Paper 3.

### **Continuing support for Victorians with disability**

Funding is continued for a range of supports for people with disability including coordination of mainstream supports for people with complex disability needs:

- Victorian Disability Advocacy program
- supporting Victorians with disability ineligible for the NDIS
- autism assessment grants
- Family Services Specialist Disability Practitioner program
- Steps to Confident Parenting program
- Parenting Children with Complex Disability program
- supporting children with complex disability and their families to access mainstream supports.

Funding for this initiative is linked to the Early Intervention Investment Framework.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Disability Services output.

### **Disability and Social Services Regulation**

Funding is provided to support the new independent Social Services Regulator overseeing the social services sector, ensuring services are delivered safely and consistently with the Social Service Standards.

Funding is continued for the Victorian Disability Worker Commission to perform its statutory functions, including regulatory oversight of disability workers and addressing breaches of the disability worker code of conduct. Funding is also provided for the functions of the Disability Services Commissioner, which resolves complaints about non-NDIS disability service providers in Victoria.

This initiative contributes to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Disability Services and Child Protection and Family Services outputs.